

## CLAIMS

1. A method of apprising a salesperson of consumer interactions with an employer of the salesperson, the method comprising:
  - defining a target item for the salesperson;
  - associating the salesperson with a customer;
  - 5        monitoring an on-line communication channel for an occurrence of a communication involving the customer and including the target item; and
  - notifying the salesperson upon the occurrence.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  - defining at least one target item for each of a plurality of salespersons;
  - associating each of the plurality of salespersons with at least one customer;
  - monitoring at least one on-line communication channel for occurrences of
  - communications involving the at least one customer associated with each of the plurality of salespersons, and including the at least one target item defined by each of the plurality of salespersons, and
  - notifying each of the plurality of salespersons of the occurrences.
3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  - authorizing the salesperson prior to providing access to the target items and notifications.
4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  - authorizing the customer prior to providing access to the on-line communication channel.
5. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
  - storing a record of the occurrences in a history
6. The method of Claim 5 further comprising:
  - accessing the history;
  - generating a report from the history.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the on-line communication channel is e-mail, an asynchronous on-line discussion group, a synchronous on-line discussion group or instant messaging.
8. The method of Claim 1 wherein the on-line communication channel is a public on-line communication channel or a restricted on-line communication channel.
9. The method of Claim 1 wherein the communication is between the customer and a representative of the employer or the customer and a customer peer.
10. The method of Claim 1 wherein the salesperson is an electronic agent.
11. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of monitoring comprises:  
receiving the communication from the customer on the on-line communication channel;  
determining whether the salesperson is associated with the customer; and  
determining whether the target item for the salesperson is in the communication that has been received when the salesperson is associated with the customer.
12. The method of Claim 11 wherein the step of monitoring further comprises:  
determining whether the communication is on a public, on-line communication channel or a restricted, on-line communication channel;  
requesting authorization information when the communication is on the restricted, on-line communication channel.
13. The method of Claim 1 wherein target items comprise alphanumeric characters, alphanumeric strings, emoticons, names of product offerings or codes.
14. A device for providing a salesperson with notification of consumer interactions with an employer of the salesperson, the device comprising:  
a memory unit; and

5 a processing unit disposed in communication with the memory unit, the processing unit  
configured to:  
define a target item for the salesperson;  
associate the salesperson with a customer;  
monitor an on-line communication channel for an occurrence of a communication  
involving the customer and including the target item; and  
10 notify the salesperson upon the occurrence.

15. The device of Claim 14 wherein the processing unit is configured to:  
define at least one target item for each of a plurality of salespersons;  
associate each of the plurality of salespersons with at least one customer;  
monitor at least one on-line communication channel for occurrences of communications  
involving the at least one customer associated with each of the plurality of salespersons, and  
including the at least one target item defined by each of the plurality of salespersons, and  
notify each of the plurality of salespersons of the occurrences.

16. The device of Claim 14 wherein the processing unit is further configured to::  
authorize the salesperson prior to providing access to the target items and notifications.

17. The device of Claim 14 wherein the processing unit is further configured to:  
authorize the customer prior to providing access to the on-line communication channel.

18. The device of Claim 14 wherein the processing unit is further configured to::  
store a record of the occurrences in a history.

19. The device of Claim 18 wherein the processing unit is further configured to::  
access the history;  
generate a report from the history.

20. The device of Claim 14 wherein the on-line communication channel is e-mail, an asynchronous on-line discussion group, a synchronous on-line discussion group or instant messaging.
21. The device of Claim 14 wherein the on-line communication channel is a public on-line communication channel or a restricted on-line communication channel.
22. The device of Claim 14 wherein the communication is between the customer and a representative of the employer or the customer and a customer peer.
23. The device of Claim 14 wherein the salesperson is an electronic agent.
24. The device of Claim 14 wherein the processing unit is configured to:
- receive the communication from the customer on the on-line communication channel;
  - determine whether the salesperson is associated with the customer; and
  - determine whether the target item for the salesperson is in the communication that has been received when the salesperson is associated with the customer.
25. The device of Claim 24 wherein the processing unit is configured to:
- determine whether the communication is on a public, on-line communication channel or a restricted, on-line communication channel;
  - request authorization information when the communication is on the restricted, on-line communication channel.
26. The device of Claim 14 wherein target items comprise alphanumeric characters, alphanumeric strings, emoticons, names of product offerings or codes.
27. A device for providing a salesperson with notification of consumer interactions with an employer of the salesperson, the device comprising:
- a system settings module, the system settings module permitting the salesperson to set up at least one target and to associate with at least one customer;

5 a channel monitor, the channel monitor enabling an on-line communication channel  
between the salesperson and the at least one customer, the channel monitor analyzing the content  
of communications on the on-line communication channel for ones of the communications that  
are with the at least one customer associated with the salesperson and that include content  
matching the at least one target set up by the salesperson; the channel monitor generating  
10 notifications to the salesperson for the ones of the communications;

a report generator, the report generator receiving a query from the salesperson and  
reporting ones of the communications matching of parameters of the query.

28. The device of Claim 27 further comprising:

an first authorization unit, the authorization unit requesting salesperson  
information prior to permitting access to the system settings module or the report generator

29. The device of Claim 27 further comprising:

an first authorization unit, the authorization unit requesting customer information prior to  
permitting access to the on-line communication channel.

30. The device of Claim 27 wherein the on-line communication channel is e-mail, an  
asynchronous on-line discussion group, a synchronous on-line discussion group or instant  
messaging.

31. The device of Claim 27 wherein the on-line communication channel is a public on-line  
communication channel or a restricted on-line communication channel.

32. The device of Claim 27 wherein the communication is between the customer and a  
representative of the employer or the customer and a customer peer.

33. The device of Claim 27 wherein the salesperson is an electronic agent.

34. The device of Claim 27 wherein target items comprise alphanumeric characters,  
alphanumeric strings, emoticons, names of product offerings or codes.